In this paper we present a new database for off-line Arabic handwriting recognition, together with a few preprocessing procedures. We designed, collected, stored and retrieved a database of Arabic handwritten (AHDB). This resulted in a one of its kind database dealing with handwritten information from Arabic text, both in terms of the size of the database as well as the number of different writers involved. We further designed an innovative, simple yet powerful in place tagging procedure for our database. It enables us to extract at will the bitmaps of words. We also build a preprocessing class, which contains some useful preprocessing operations. In this paper the most popular words in Arabic writing was found for the first time, using a special designed program.

Key words: off-line, Arabic, handwriting, recognition, database, preprocessing.